SCS CC 282

531

6023

March 17, 1978

Dear Mr. Wirth:

As you have previously expressed concern in the John Victor Stoen custody case, I am pleased to forward this progress report.

On February 24, the American Consul in Georgetown, Guyana met with the new Guyanese Minister of Justice, Mohamed Shahabuddeen. Minister Shahabuddeen stated that child custody cases are civil disputes and therefore there is no legal requirement that hearings be scheduled within a specific time period. Further, the Minister indicated that a judge's written opinion may take four months to compose and release. Consequently, the delay to date in the Stoen case is not considered excessive under Guyanese legal procedures.

The Department shall continue to keep you informed of progress in this case. Should you require further information, please contact our Office of Special Consular Services, telephone 632-3015.

Sincerely,

GW

Douglas J. Bennet, Jr.
Assistant Secretary
For Congressional Relations

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MPP
REVIEWED BY _____ DATE _____
XDS EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKING
RELEASABLE
PA or FOIA EXEMPT

The Honorable
Timothy E. Wirth,
House of Representatives.

CA:SCS:EHO Kane:gjl:wp 3/10/78
x29461

Clearances: SCS - Ms. Powers
SCS - Mr. Dobrenchuk
SCS - Mr. Lambert
CA - Miss Watson
H - Mr. Krizek